

Abel Wolman House is put on the market; [FINAL Edition]

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Abstract (Summary)

Abel Wolman and chemist Linn Enslow made a leap forward in public health science during the late 1920s when they developed a method of making drinking water safe by treating it with an otherwise toxic substance, chlorine. His pioneering work in Baltimore helped end the waterborne epidemics that had marred urban life.

Although Abel Wolman served as a consultant to more than 50 nations, he also knew when to rely on others. Reds Wolman said that his parents deferred to Mr. [Laurence Hall Fowler] for the most part -- although they reviewed the design at every step. Reds Wolman said his father's hand in the house is best seen in the structure. Part of the frame, he said, consists of steel beams, which have been rarely used in single-family construction.

PHOTO 1 PHOTO 2; Abel Wolman Abel Wolman's town house on North Charles Street was designed by noted Baltimore architect Laurence Hall Fowler.; Credit: 1976 PHOTO

Full Text (709 words)

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For decades, Johns Hopkins University Professor Abel Wolman was considered the world's best-known consultants on water and public health.

An expert on sanitary engineering and water resources, Dr. Wolman advised dozens of international leaders and helped bring safe drinking water to millions of people.

He also led the way in establishing a bountiful water supply for his native Baltimore.

Now, four years after Dr. Wolman's death at age 96, the house he built in Baltimore and lived in for half a century is on the market.

The Abel Wolman House, at 3213 N. Charles St., has a double cachet. It was designed by the noted Baltimore architect Laurence Hall Fowler.

Of the more than five dozen houses that Mr. Fowler designed for wealthy and prominent Baltimoreans from 1906 to 1945, the Wolman residence is considered one of the most impressive and unusual -- a "splendid and simple town house . . . created with modest artistic means," in the words of Fowler scholar Egon Verheyen.

M. Gordon "Reds" Wolman, Abel Wolman's only child and a professor of geography at Hopkins, said he put the three-story house on the market because members of his family cannot continue to live there. He said he and his wife have been ensconced in Mount Washington for more than 30 years.

"We're doing this with a great deal of regret," he said.

Said William Magruder, a listing agent with O'Connor, Piper & Flynn Realtors, "It's an architectural landmark, and it's all-original."

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Set back from the street between Blackstone Apartments and Hopkins' Steinwald Alumni House, the flat-roofed brick house is essentially a long, narrow box.

Distinguished by an unusual window arrangement, including a large bay window overlooking Charles Street, it follows the plan of the English town house. The second floor contains the living room and master bedroom. The first floor contains the dining room and kitchen, the third has a guest bedroom and study. The basement level opens onto a terrace and garden.

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Another sign is that the basement ductwork is carefully labeled with hand-lettered stencils to show where each duct leads. The house is also full of built-in bookshelves and cabinets that contained his library.

All the bathrooms are vintage 1938. Although Abel Wolman is considered the father of modern plumbing, he was not one to tinker with the fixtures, his son said. "That was not my father."

The house has no parking space on the grounds because the Wolmans did not own a car. Dr. Wolman relied on buses and cabs and walked to work until he

was 96.

Baltimore architect Michael Trostel calls the house "one of the most elegant" in Baltimore. "It has beautiful proportions and elegant lines," he said.

"I wouldn't call it stripped-down Federal, but a simplified Federal design that was very popular in the 1920s and 1930s."

The asking price is \$185,000. Reds Wolman said he hopes it will attract a buyer who takes good care of it.

Slide show to explore works of Fowler

The Baltimore Architecture Foundation and Evergreen House of the Johns Hopkins University will present a slide show and commentary on the work of Laurence Hall Fowler today at 7 p.m. in the Evergreen House Theater, 4545 N. Charles St.

Baltimore architect Michael Trostel and Evening Sun columnist Jacques Kelly will discuss Mr. Fowler's work.

Cost is \$5.

[Illustration]

PHOTO 1 PHOTO 2; Caption: Abel Wolman Abel Wolman's town house on North Charles Street was designed by noted Baltimore architect Laurence Hall Fowler.; Credit: 1976 PHOTO

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